

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

AF-04 OMB-01 L-01 EB-03 SAM-01 SAB-01 IGA-01 SP-02

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R 211151Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7003

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 0895

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, JO, MO, MU, XA

SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI - SAHARAN DISPUTE

1. FOR WHAT THIS WORTH I REPORT THE PORTION OF MY
CONVERSATION WITH RIFAI FEBRUARY 19 ON SAHARAN ISSUE.

2. RIFAI SAID THAT HIS AMBASSADOR TO SAUDI ARABIA,
SHEIKH SHANQITI, HAD RETURNED FROM A VISIT TO NOUAKCHOTT
AND REPORTED PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH (NOT UNEXPECTEDLY)
IN A VERY ANTI-ALGERIAN FRAME OF MIND. SHANQITI SAID
OULD DADDAH CLAIMED HE HAD FACILITIATED ALGERIAN ENTREE
INTO BLACK AFRICA AND NOW WANTED TO TRY TO SHUT IT OFF.
MAURITANIA WAS RIPE FOR A RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE US,
BUT THE US WAS INSISTING ON HAGGLING OVER WEAPONS,
BY RELEASING THEM AS COMMERCIAL SALES, NOT GIFTS.
ALL MAURITANIANS WANTED WAS THE GIFT OF SOME MACHINE
GUNS AND THE US COULD THEREBY HELP TO IMPROVE RELATIONS
IN MAURITANIA AND IN AFRICA IN GENERAL. THERE WERE
THEN ALLUSIONS MADE TO ANGOLA AND WHAT WAS HAPPENING
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TO THE US IN AFRICA.

3. I TOLD RIFAI THAT US ARMS PROVISION WAS A COMPLEX BUSINESS FOR US AND ONE WHICH HE ALREADY KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT. I ALSO TOLD HIM HIS REPORT WAS INTERESING ON THE QUESTION OF US-MAURITANIAN TIES AND A "CHANCE" FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS.

4. GRATEFUL FOR ANY COMMENTS FROM ALGIERS AND NOUAKCHOTT ON RIFAI'S ASSERTIONS.
PICKERING

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NNN

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